

Management

Creativity and Innovation in Business and Education

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CREATIVITY AS A DETERMINANT OF SHAPING THE CAREER PATH

ABSTRACT

Planning a career path was until recently the operation of human resource management carried out by organizations, which becomes inadequate to meet the needs of the current situation on the labour market. The period of employment with the same employer has become significantly shorter now. The main reasons for this are two. On the one hand, organizations seeking to maintain flexibility do not establish long-term employment relationships, on the other – also employees increasingly want to accumulate rich professional experience and independently shape their own career path. The effectiveness of individual professional development planning depends largely on the ability of creative thinking, the ease of finding themselves in new situations, finding unconventional solutions and the courage to pursue them. Therefore, the aim of the article was to show what impact the creativity has on planning and development of career paths.

Keywords: career path, creativity, human resource management.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of managing human resources is similar to the Welfare State. It is so, because it contains actions the main purpose of which is to fulfill various employees' needs in order to get them involved in functioning of the organisation. However, a time has come when some of these might change. Nowadays, a long-term human resources planning is not being enforced due to shortening of employee contracts durations. Automatically, approach to the career development is also changing. A new tendency is emerging where careers of individual employees are no longer being planned by human resource departments but rather by the individuals themselves. This shift in tendency is due to the fact that nowadays career development is not a strict organisational action, but more and more often an action plan enforced by individuals from the beginning of their

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careers. Due to more frequent career changes, needs for qualifications improvements or simply self employment decisions, it is now imperative to manage one's own career development. It is a process, in which, nowadays, one must excel at innovativeness of searching for new methods involved in that process, but also in ability of utilising existing modern solutions, used to self improve one's professional skills. The most imperative factor, which allows enforcing career path in an effective manner is creativity – a feature which allows for finding new solutions needed, e.g. in searching for ways of career planning and development of professional skills. Thanks to this feature, one has an opportunity to find chances for employment and stand out from the crowd. It is most important competence in the present labour market. The main objective of this publication is to show what is the influence of creativity on the planning and development of career path.

2. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATH IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ZZL

„One of the basic assumptions of human resources planning is considering employees as strategic resources of the employer, which require and are worth investing in” (Pocztowski 2003: 217). Development of human resources is usually associated with actions such as department shifts, career managing and employee training. A little bit narrower aspect of this activity shows that it is a process which exhibits some strategic characteristics that allow employees to learn, organise and plan trainings and evaluate educational training programs, which leads to growth of work efficiency and increase the market value of human resources (Pocztowski 2003: 294).

One can distinguish several aspects of human development in the organisation: from the organisational perspective, development needs are considered from the perspective of the whole organisation, or institution. In the context of a group, one aims to fulfill the needs of certain formal and informal working teams, whereas in the aspect of individuals, organisation aims at fulfilling the needs of individual employees (Baruk 2006: 101).

One of the tasks of human resources management in the organisation is to take care of individual development of employees. By the term *development* one means all actions which are intended to prepare employees – when they are employed by the organisation – to work and to take positions with greater responsibility. In the context of human resources management, dynamics and direction of development of individual employees are on the one hand determined by goals and company targets assumptions and on the other by individual needs and aspirations of individuals. In order to increase effectiveness of actions in the field of professional

development of the organisation's personnel, one should take necessary steps to ensure that this process is customized and is aiming at the employees' involvement (Listwan 1995: 73).

By the term „employee development plan” one usually means a set of measures taken in order to determine the employee's career goals. This includes identification and verification of his or her needs, aspirations and opportunities, and then planning actions needed to achieve the company's goals. In practice, this often takes a form of a plan of career path.

Career is usually defined by a series of positions, jobs and functions performed by an employee in the past, as well as all possible chances for new employment available in the future which can be achieved provided that certain complex requirements are met. The requirements taken into account when designing the plan of career path can be divided into three groups:

- those specifying the type and level of employee's desired qualifications,
- those indicating the possession of essential professional experience,
- those related to the results achieved when previous tasks were performed.

Forming the careers of employees is rather a big issue in the context of the development of organisation's human resources. The importance of this activity is its close relation to the individual needs of an employee and is in fact a reaction to them. (...) Professional system of managing careers in the organization strengthens the motivation system of the organization, which leads to increased employee loyalty, prolongs the employment time and increases innovativeness and effectiveness of individual employees. In addition to results favorable for the organization, there are also some personal benefits. These include increased employee attractiveness for potential employers (employability) and adaptability to the changing requirements on the labour market (adaptability) (Jamka 2002: 148).

3. THE ESSENCE OF CHANGES IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATHS

Globalisation, progress of information technologies and knowledge-based economics – these are the main factors influencing changes in human resources management. Information society is made by people who are conscious, who want to completely independently control their own future by independent choice of certain career paths (Lewicka 2010: 19). Such people work to accomplish self-realisation and achieve professional satisfaction by searching for attractive positions and functions in various departments of companies and organisations. They are creative in their actions, not afraid of new, even risky challenges; they implement new unique solutions, and always look for new initiatives.

A famous American economist and urbanist R. Florida introduced new concept of „creative class”. This class characterises itself by leaving the dominating model of work for corporation. Members of this class are involved in creating in its broadest possible meaning, and they are not only artists. The leading group includes scientists and engineers, professors, writers, scene artists, actors, designers and architects, as well as experts of the modern society: reporters, journalist, market and opinion researchers, think-tank, analysts, and opinion setters. Besides the leading group, the creative class also includes creative professionals working in many industry branches based on knowledge, such as high tech, finances, lawyers, medical and enterprise management. These people work by finding creative solutions to problems, based on complex resources of knowledge in searching for innovative solutions. They use and join various standard methods in a unique way to fit the situation, testing and trying new ideas and innovations (Florida 2005: 34–35). The main characteristics of these people are also the facts that they independently manage their own careers without tying it too tightly to a single organisation.

Hence, nowadays there is a tendency of leaving the approaches and methods which are based on the assumption that the responsibility of building a career path belongs only to HR departments. People looking for a job on the current market should themselves take care of their professional development. People who have just joined the market should consciously plan their career paths, independently of future employer.

Contemporary companies invest in loyal employees, but only up to the point when a given employee is attractive as a worker and compensates the spending by achieving the expected results. Employers are now in the position where the number of people looking for a job is greater than available positions. The dominance of demand over supply on the labour market does not encourage employers to invest in employees in such a way that they might become more valuable, seeking employment elsewhere. Therefore each person that gets employed should independently take care of extending one's own competencies, just in case of the probable change of employer. Currently everyone is creating ones own growth, depending on preferences.

4. BASICS OF BUILDING AN INDEPENDENT CAREER PATH

One of the most fundamental ways of building one's own advantage as employee/employer is employability. This term appeared in the late '50s and is evolving around subjects related to keeping employment and usability as professionals. Employability is usually associated with the ability of forecasting and adaptability to changes, „employees' flexibility” and their competitiveness on the internal and external market (Marzec 2010: 129). From this perspective,

employability is being viewed as an ability, which allows employees to recognise and implement chances or employment on the internal and external market as well as other possibilities for career development.

People, who show high level of employability, can consciously shape their own attitude and behaviours in such a way which increases circumstances and improves their own chances for employment and professional success. Thanks to well developed employability, a loss of job does not influence the employee in a destructive way, this is so, because such a person will see in such a situation an opportunity for growth and positive changes, therefore a loss of job is, for such people, usually less painful experience, with which they cope much better, as opposite to the people with a low level of employability (Marzec 2010: 129).

To be able of employability, one must fulfill few basic conditions, which include but are not restricted to the following topics (Valcour):

1. Careers shape depends on each individual person, who possesses the awareness of their own ambitions and values, and using this knowledge can work on building own career path.
2. We must control and document values which determine us, and which are important from the perspective of the employer; it is worth writing them down regularly, the information based on what others say about us can also be useful.
3. It is important to pursue one's own goals, while maintaining productive relations with the persons from whom you can learn a lot and who can help you.
4. People who are full of energy and commitment can become an indispensable motivator for action. It is worth working with such people.

Furthermore, designing the career should be based on an assessment of one's own strengths and weaknesses. Awareness of own passions and skills can become the key to finding and building own career path. This is important because making choices related to employment often do not coincide with own passions and interests but are rather dictated by the influence of others or are results of financial matters. This frequently leads to dissatisfaction and frustration caused by the lack of opportunities for self-realisation. Therefore, honest self-assessment of one's abilities and skills is the foundation for building a career path consistent with individual preferences. Very likely, the person's full potential will be used, whereas in other circumstances it would stay dormant (Sinior).

Creativity, which determines the attractiveness of the modern labour market, is also gaining in importance. This is due to the fact that ability to innovative, unorthodox approach becomes invaluable. It allows using opportunistic chances. Moreover, creative people are looking for new opportunities, possibilities, and ways to self-realisation. Thus, in the context of changes that we have described, creativity helps to find own way in new circumstances, to actively meet them.

5. THE NEED TO BE RECOGNISABLE ON THE LABOUR MARKET

One of the elements required for building career path is the ability to prepare a good CV which allows you to be seen in the crowd of so many applicants. Nowadays, one of the popular forms is a creative CV – custom layout which presents you in a unique way. Usually, a creative CV distinguishes itself by unusual graphics and way of presenting information, as shown below.

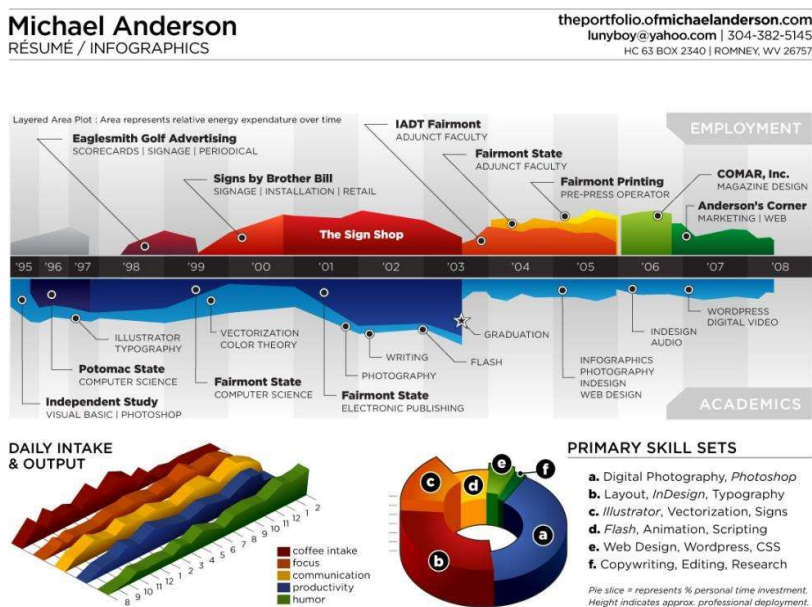


Figure 1. Example of creative CV

Source: <http://pracabielsko.com.pl/artykuly/28/Dobre-rady-Curriculum-Vitae>, 21.05.2015.

One of the tools used for building and managing ones own image in the network is a social networking site focused on career development – LinkedIn. This portal „is addressed to people consciously building their career who know the value of an extensive network of contacts”. The motto of the site is „The foundation is a professional online presence. Professional, that is, one which allows increasing the employability of the individual, and that is an asset in the eyes of a potential employer”. By creating your interactive profile, you are creating

your professional business card, by posting not only information about your education and experience, but also prepared presentations and written articles. A great advantage of the portal is the ability to add friends, recommendations and references from former employers, co-workers and other people with whom cooperation can be important from the point of view of a person's career. It is also important that LinkedIn profiles are highly ranked on the result lists of popular search engines, primarily Google. It is highly likely that recruiters looking for information on potential candidates in the network will come across their LinkedIn „business cards”. To use the full potential of LinkedIn one should invest time in creating and updating one's own professional profile and expansion of contact network. It is a tool on which one can work and use not only when looking for a job, but also throughout one's whole career (<http://rynekpracy.org/x/629528>). Both the CV and social media profile is a form of communication with the environment. Its key element is the ability to be visible in the existing flood of information. Creativity is here indispensable, especially in terms of creating graphics that will expose key content in a distinctive way.

6. THE QUEST FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT

A continuous learning is vital for shaping a career path. It can truly affect finding one's way on the labour market, which is constantly changing, forming and building. „The unpredictable trends on the labour market, rapid changes and the development of various fields, generate the demand for specialists in completely new areas” (Paszowska-Rogacz, Wojtowicz). R. Kiyosaki once said that „when you stop learning, you start dying”. This statement is an introduction to the concept of „lifelong learning”, which means learning throughout life. The concept takes into account all human actions which are aiming at continuous improvement of skills, personal development and preparation for employment.

Technological development gives them many opportunities to broaden their knowledge; they are looking for the best solutions using available tools. One can now see a revolution of higher education, of which most important part MOOCs, or „Massive Open Online Courses”. These courses are available on the Internet on a massive scale, so that one can improve, raise or change qualifications. High-quality courses and materials are available through an alternative access to online knowledge. These are organised by prestigious foreign universities such as MIT, Harvard (EDX), Yale University and Stanford University (Coursera). It is a big opportunity for development for people working in Poland, who can simultaneously learn from the best foreign professors. Besides that, TEDx which is a series of short talks under the common motto „ideas worth spreading” is becoming more and more popular. Entrepreneurs, musicians, politicians, as well

as designers at a time slot of up to 18 minutes give talks which are suppose to inspire others (http://www.fpiec.pl/nowi_mieszczenie_f5_analytics.pdf).

The quest for self-development is a stimulus distinguishing creative people, looking for inspiration, not only in the physical world around them, but also through learning, acquiring and processing new information.

7. CREATIVITY IN BUILDING A CAREER PATH

Creativity affects the curiosity, willingness for action and motivates to seeking new solutions, which is why young people are independently deciding about their professional development. Being open minded for new experiences, they rely on cleverness and innovation, e.g. by establishing their own startups. They follow their own rules without taking unwittingly opinions of other people and the multitude of information feeds makes this task much easier (http://www.fpiec.pl/nowi_mieszczenie_f5_analytics.pdf).

As a formal definition of a Start-up, one can take a young company or organisation with a clear goal. This goal distinguishes a Start-up from an enterprise. An enterprise always focuses mainly on maximising profits. In contrast, a start-up is a kind of experiment, whose foundation is innovation; the constant search based on continuous changes. Its intention is to find a business model that is a way to achieve a stable and regular income. Running a start-up is the best business school one can imagine; therefore it is a perfect solution for young people, often with no business experience or financial resources. Instead of money, one must tune oneself for exploration, learning and gaining new contacts. An inherent attribute of start-ups are failures and dead-end solutions. However, one can follow own passion, use the full potential of one's creativity and be not afraid of failure – after all, in the world of start-ups failure is a normality. Often, it is quite the opposite – it is a source of pride because it proves the continuing undertaken effort (<http://biznesflow.pl/czym-jest-startup/>). Autonomy, creativity, desire for independence and ambition cause an increased level of entrepreneurial activity among representatives of the 25–34 age group – in Poland up 77.1% of people in this age group are employed. Thanks to Kickstarter and other crowd funding platforms it is now easier to start a small or medium company. According to the OECD report „Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2014”, micro-enterprises employing up to 10 workers constitute, depending on the country, between 70 and 95% of all companies.

Nowadays, one of the ways to pursue a career path, which uses creativity and which could also be an alternative for professionals offering their services in a particular area, is a freelancing. What distinguishes freelancers among representatives of other professions is that they can perform their work at a distance. Freelancing is gaining on popularity mostly due to the Internet. The

term „freelancer” is defined as anyone who offers their services at a distance. The most common occupations that fall in this category are: journalist, photographer, copywriter, programmer, translator and graphic designer. Virtually anyone can work as a freelancer, regardless of age. To become a freelancer it is extremely important to possess certain skills and features. Freelancer should be methodical and consistent in action, and most of all should be able to perfectly organize working hours. For a freelancer it is important to constantly search for new jobs. Freelancers can work at home or in one of the so-called co-working offices. Every freelancer, besides the fact that he or she is an expert in the area of choice, should also have a professional portfolio that becomes a passport to obtain new orders. Working remotely has undoubtedly a lot of advantages and is becoming a more readily undertaken form of employment. Freelancers may execute orders at any time (of day or night) and to determine their own working conditions (<http://www.freelancerzy.pl/>). Currently, a number of economically active people, belonging mainly to the generation Y, are characterized by high expectations and requirements in relation to work and themselves. According to the Deloitte report „The Deloitte Millennial Survey”, 70% of them consider rejecting the future jobs in the traditional company in favour of their own businesses or freelancing.

8. SUMMARY

Nowadays, it is very difficult to build a career path that would have a chance to expand without creativity in actions undertaken. Creativity, as one of your assets as a professional, can be used at the stage of searching for a profession and then during the recruitment process. Creative CV and cover letter may affect the success, because they certainly will be noticed when viewed against other, identical-looking documents. Creativity goes hand in hand with the need for self-development; these two motivate to look for modern and fulfilling individual expectations forms of competence development. Moreover, creativity helps in the search for professional initiatives and forms of work that allow for professional satisfaction. As a result, it becomes possible to build a career that is flexible and dynamic. This affects the attractiveness of the person on the labour market.

Creativity distinguishes people who want to shape their own future career through individual decisions concerning employment, people who consider interference from companies as being non-crucial in this matter. They shape their image, acquire the necessary knowledge and skills (know-how), build a network of mutual connections and contacts (networking), thanks to which they have an easy access to the exchange of information essential for achieving their objectives.

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AUTHOR NOTE

Natalia Stobiecka graduated from Faculty of Management at University of Lodz in 2015 in the field of Human Resource Management. Her dissertation concerns „Creativity as determinant of career development path”. Currently she is working as an intern at Nordea Operations Centre in Łódź in Human Resource Department and studying extramural Graphic Design at Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna in Łódź. She is interested in creativity with reference to human resources, especially in training and development activities. In the future she would like to combine her management and design skills in order to become an Art Director.

Dominika Szykowska graduated with Bachelor degree in Human Resource Management from the University of Łódź in 2015. The subject of her bachelor thesis is the role of creativity in the process of building a career path. She is an active member of the Students Society of the Business Creativity „Bizaktywne” and since its establishment in 2014 her main function is the society’s treasurer. Currently she is continuing her studies of the career and creativity interaction at the same university.

Creativity is now an exposed trait. This is due to the high need for innovation, original and useful solutions that serve the development of the organization, their effective market entry and long-term survival. This publication is a collection of papers prepared under The First National Conference „CREATIVE VIBES. Kreatywnością napędzamy gospodarkę”, whose aim was to stir issues concerning the significance of creativity from the point of view of the development of innovative economy, as well as to draw attention to the role of creativity in the education process of students and its impact on the development of professional competence.



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